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Michigan Senate Passes “Flagstar Bank” Fire Safety First Package

LANSING—The Michigan Senate today unanimously passed the Fire Safety First Package, a set of four bills requiring the installation of smoke alarms in multiple dwellings and historical buildings. State Sen. Shirley Johnson (R-Troy) sponsored three of the four bills in the package and voiced her appreciation to her colleagues.

“Too many lives have senselessly been taken because a smoke detector was not installed on the premises. If this legislation results in just one life saved, then we have done our job,” Johnson stated. “I appreciate my colleagues’ support, as well as Flagstar Bank for their efforts.”

The first bill, Senate Bill 337 requires a person owning a class “A” multiple dwelling constructed prior to Nov. 6, 1974, to be equipped with a single-station or multiple-station smoke alarm that complies with the state construction code. Multiple dwellings include tenement houses, apartment houses, duplex apartments and apartment hotels.

Other proposed measures address municipally designated historical sites. Senate Bill 338 provides that the preservation of facilities, buildings or structures determined to be a historic site by a municipality have to include, at a minimum, a fire alarm system. Senate Bill 339 permits a municipal historic district commission to withhold a “certificate of appropriateness” to an applicant requesting an exterior renovation, unless a fire alarm system or smoke alarm is installed prior to project completion.

The final bill in the package, SB 742, grants authority to the Director of the Department of Consumer and Industry Services to promulgate rules regarding the smoke alarm systems of one, two or multiple family dwelling units built prior to Nov. 6, 1974. It provides the necessary framework for implementation of SB 337.

“Due credit is owed to Flagstar Bank, whose commitment to cultivating this initiative from an idea to reality proved essential in the bills’ passage,” Johnson said.

(More)

The legislation arose after Flagstar Bank provided Senator Johnson with a 2001 study confirming that 148 people perished in Michigan fires and requested the introduction of legislation complimenting their smoke detector initiatives.

In 2002 the total number of fire fatalities rose to 167, with 77% of all residential fatalities derived from dwellings with either no smoke alarm or one that was not operational.

“Many of these lives could have been saved if a smoke alarm had been properly installed on the premises,” Johnson said.